

Claims

1. A drug product for the prevention, improvement in conditions relating to, and/or treatment of diabetes, comprising β (1 \rightarrow 3) glucan derived from vegetable material and having a molecular weight of from about 5,000 to about 20,000.
2. The drug product of claim 1, wherein said vegetable matter comprises a mushroom.
3. The drug product of claim 1, wherein said β (1 \rightarrow 3) glucan is obtained by hydrolysis of a glucan.
4. The drug product of claim 1, wherein said β (1 \rightarrow 3) glucan is obtained from the aqueous extraction product of a mushroom.
5. The drug product of claim 4, wherein said β (1 \rightarrow 3) glucan is further obtained by alcohol precipitation and decomposition.
6. The drug product of claim 1, which is suitable for oral administration.
7. The drug product of claim 1, wherein said diabetes is selected from the group consisting of insulin-dependent, and non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus.
8. The drug product of claim 1, wherein said molecular weight from about 5,000 to about 20,000 denotes an average molecular weight.
9. The drug product of claim 2, wherein said mushroom comprises Shiitake.
10. The drug product of claim 1, which is in the form of a health food product.

11. A method of preventing, improving conditions relating to, and/or treating diabetes comprising administering to a body a drug product comprising β (1 \rightarrow 3) glucan derived from vegetable material and having a molecular weight from about 5,000 to about 20,000.
12. The method of claim 11, wherein said β (1 \rightarrow 3) glucan is derived from a Shiitake mushroom.
13. The method of claim 11, wherein said drug product is suitable for oral administration.
14. A drug product useful in preventing, improving conditions relating to, and/or treating diabetes comprising β (1 \rightarrow 3) glucan derived from a Shiitake mushroom and having a molecular weight from about 5,000 to about 20,000.
15. A method of preventing, improving conditions relating to, and/or treating diabetes comprising administering orally to a body a drug product comprising β (1 \rightarrow 3) glucan derived from a Shiitake mushroom and having a molecular weight from about 5,000 to about 20,000.